COOKING & EATING

Baking above your pay grade

Amy Drew: Don't be afraid to push your limits in your kitchen. **D1**

SPORTS

Scott Spurrier on AAF, XFL

Bianchi: Famed coach's son looks to catch on after leagues fold. **C1**

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Firms want relief loans, but not for paychecks

Large hotel, restaurant companies getting small-business funds want to spend less of the money paying workers

By Jason Garcia

The Pennsylvania investment firm that owns the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove in Miami has applied for as many as 48 taxpayer-backed loans under an emergency program meant to help the nation's smallest businesses hang on to their employees through the coronavirus pandemic.

A Maryland hotel company that did more than $1.5 billion in revenue last year has applied for more than 50 loans — and been approved for about 10 so far.

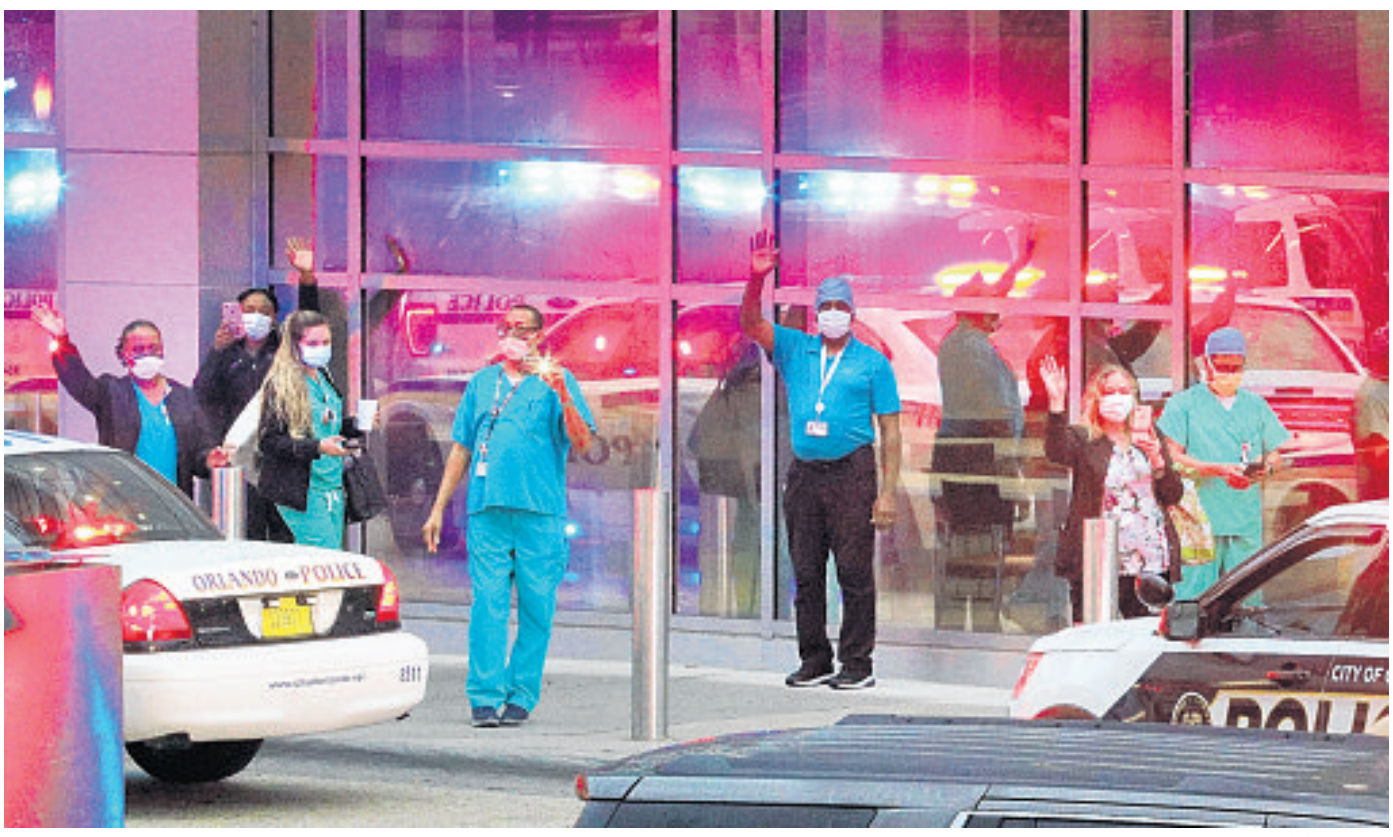
And Winter Park's Ruth's Hospitality Group Inc. — the parent company of Ruth's Chris Steak House that made $42 million in profits last year and spent $41 million buying back stock and paying dividends to shareholders — revealed Monday that it has received $20 million through two small business loans.

Across the country, hotel and restaurant companies of all sizes are tapping into the "Paycheck Protection Program," the $350 billion fund that Congress set up specifically for small businesses as part of an overall $2.2 trillion economic rescue plan.

Midsized and large hoteliers and restaurateurs are qualifying for the potentially forgivable loans — more than one, in many cases — under special rules written into the program at the request of industry lobbyists, who argued that hospitality businesses have been uniquely devastated by coast-to-coast travel bans, shutdowns and shelter-in-place orders.

And now — as congressional leaders negotiate another spending bill that would

*Please turn to **FIRMS, A10***



JOE BURBANK/ORLANDO SENTINEL

A SOCIALLY-DISTANT SALUTE

Hospital workers wave as a parade of first responders arrives with lights and sirens at Orlando Health's Orlando Regional Medical Center for a "Salute to Medical Professionals" on Wednesday evening. Orlando's various police, fire and rescue agencies participated in the event to honor medical workers who have been on the front lines during the coronavirus crisis.

DeSantis sets up panel to 'reopen'

Governor changes leadership with new unemployment boss

By Steven Lemongello

Following President Trump's lead, Gov. Ron DeSantis on Wednesday created a task force to plan for the "resurgence and reopening of Florida" from the coronavirus shutdown.

DeSantis also made a major shuffle in leadership by sidelining the state's Department of Economic Opportunity head Ken Lawson and putting Management Services chief Jonathan Satter in charge of the state's beleaguered unemployment compensation system.

DeSantis

The governor also notably distanced himself from Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees' comments Monday that social distancing could last as long as a year or more until there was a vaccine.

Trump, who is eager to "reopen" the country and resume normal business following the economic damage from the coronavirus, named his daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner to what he called an "Opening the Country" panel.

*Please turn to **PANEL, A6***

Jobless in other states see quicker benefits

By Chabeli Carrazana

It's been 15 days since Scott Reinhardt applied for unemployment in Florida's struggling system and there is no indication in sight yet about when he'll receive the $275 a week maximum payment the state offers, one of the lowest payments in the nation.

Meanwhile, in Arizona, his 26-year-old son, Brian, got his check — plus the federal stimulus of $600 a week — within five days of applying for unemployment.

"I was happy for him, but frustrated knowing what we are going through here in Florida," said Reinhardt, who applied for government assistance for the first time in his 35-year career in radio on March 31. "Our whole life we've paid in and now when we need it, we can't get it."

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, which runs the unemployment system, has not answered multiple questions about when Floridians should ex-

*Please turn to **BENEFITS, A11***

Region might be at peak, Orlando Health CEO says

Strong: System will keep preparing even as data improves

By Naseem S. Miller

Central Florida might have hit its peak for coronavirus cases, Orlando Health president and CEO David Strong said in an interview with the Orlando Sentinel editorial board.

Like other health systems, Orlando Health has developed its own model, which is updated three times a day with its own data in addition to regional data.

On April 8, the health system had 58 hospitalized COVID-19 patients. On Tuesday morning, that number was 32. In addition, the overall number of new cases for the four-county area has been trending dowm, Orlando Health officials said.

Strong

"We're taking good news minute by minute, so that doesn't mean that we have stopped preparation," Strong said on Tuesday. "We still meet every day, both as an executive group and a command center group across our system to talk about capacity challenges, PPE issues, things like that."

Strong said the community's practice of social distancing has made a difference in the numbers that are being reported.

*Please turn to **PEAK, A6***

MORE COVERAGE

NATION & WORLD: Relief checks began arriving in U.S. bank accounts Wednesday, but sluggish sales at reopened stores in Europe and China show that business won't necessarily bounce right back after the crisis. **A3**

INSIDE: More than 550 breweries — including several in Central Florida — are joining forces to brew "All Together." Each brewer will pick a group to benefit from the beer sales. **A4**

MAXWELL: DeSantis' decision to let WWE stage events while shutting down other Florida businesses plays into fears about government abusing powers during a crisis. **B1**

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